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CAP'N CHADWICK

MARBLEHEAD SKIPPER AND SHOEMAKER

"TRUE AMERICAN TYPES"

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CAP'N CHADWICK

MARBLEHEAD SKIPPER AND SHOEMAKER

BY

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

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CAP'N CHADWICK

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CAPTAIN CHADWICK was born Nov. 18, 1809, truly a year of grace, seeing that it was the birth year of Lincoln and Darwin, Tennyson, Holmes, and Gladstone. My father had no public reputation whatsoever, but I dare believe he was as good as even the best of these. He was born in Marblehead, Mass., in the house which sets back from the street, opposite the Unitarian meeting-house. The old meeting-house was standing then. It gave place to the new one in 1832, the first year of my father's skippership, and, if he was not the youngest of

the contributors to the building fund, he outlived all the others. His father, Charles Chadwick, was born in 1774 to Benjamin Chadwick and Joanna Coombs. There was considerable intermarriage between the Coombs family and the Whites and Haskells, from whom my father drew his lineage on his mother's side; and it so happened that her grandmother, Ruth Coombs, was a half-sister to Joanna Coombs, her husband's mother. "Aunt Smith," Mary Coombs Smith (1770–1860), the sister of my grandfather, Charles Chadwick, outlived her brother forty-five years; and she was a great authority on the Coombs branch of the family, at once proud of its aristocracy and ashamed of certain blots

upon the scutcheon; for Michael Coombs, her uncle, had been a Tory in the Revolutionary War, had fled the town, and his property had been confiscated. This to Aunt Smith was terrible as the sin against the Holy Ghost, so ardent was her patriotic zeal. She was never able to do any political thinking except in the terms of Revolutionary politics. Republicans and Democrats she knew not, but demanded, "Which are the Whigs and which are the Tories?" as the rival processions went by with their flambeaux in 1856. There are so many of the Smiths that her frequent boast "Five good sea-captains in that one family!" was not extravagant. In an upper chamber of her house, which stood close by the sea

at Swampscott, she had in various drawers and cabinets a great many things her husband and her son had brought home from the East Indies, — woods and spices, fabrics as rare as Desdemona's handkerchief, — and she told them over as reverently as a nun her beads, intoxicating a boy's imagination with the mysterious scent her trophies breathed, and with the strangeness of her tale. There were in her companionship elements of a liberal education which the colleges do not possess.

My father's maternal grandparents were John White (1756–1833) and Ruth Haskell (1757–1808). It was a nice way they had of calling the family patriarch "Sir;" and "Sir White" always had for me a pleasant

old-world sound, and invested my ancestor, who was so called, with a peculiar dignity, as if he "drew his blood from men of royal siege." In fact, he was a man of modest force and humble occupations. He was a Revolutionary pensioner, and when a little boy my father sometimes walked to Salem with him to draw his pension. Sir White had tales to tell: he had seen Washington so many times in Cambridge, crossing the Delaware and in the affair at Trenton and Princeton, and in the bitter days at Valley Forge. In deference to the safety of Washington, so necessary to the remainder of his personal history, I have conceded the doubtfulness of the family tradition that Sir White crossed the Delaware

in the same boat with him, and it behooves many others to be as self-denying as I am. In 1777 he was discharged, and walked all the way home from Pennsylvania, falling sick upon the way, and being carefully tended by the good Samaritans into whose hands he fell. Later in the war he was a privateersman on the "Tyrannicide," but before the war was over he was married to Ruth Haskell (Oct. 1, 1780), and the following September, on the first day of the month their first child, Ruth, my beloved grandmother, was born.

Good trees must Sir White and Ruth his wife have been, judged by their fruit. And it was plentiful. After Ruth came Philip, Mary, John, Remember, Susannah, Jane,

Ambrose. Three of these, Mary, Jane, and Susannah, lived for me only as Polly, Jinny, and Sukey, in my grandmother's memory and twilight talk, two of them having died in childhood, and Susannah when she was only twenty-five years old, leaving an infant son, John Peach, for my grandmother to bring up, she being then (1819) a widow with six small children of her own, and her youngest brother in her care. Susannah and Remember, whom we always called "Aunt Member," married Frenchmen, who were, I imagine, refugees who had no taste for the Napoleonic wars.

My father's uncles, John and Philip White, were men of great physical energy and endurance, and

of large experience as fishermen and master mariners. I had a standing difference with my father as to their relative merits, my father inclining to Uncle Philip's superiority, and I to Uncle John's. The fact was that Uncle John was one of the most ardent lovers of children I have ever known, and he let them know how much he thought of them. He was always doing them some kindness or showing them some pleasing attention, and he was very confidential with them about his own sad losses, which had, indeed, been many. He was a goodly sight at any time, so kindly was his face and so beautifully bronzed, contrasting with his snowy hair, and on Sundays with his broad

white neckcloth semi-Directoire, which was his daughter's special pride. He was, of course, a privateersman in the War of 1812, and was captured, as nearly all the brave adventurers from Marblehead must have been, seeing that five hundred of them were in Dartmoor Prison at the end of the war, and many in other prisons in England and in Halifax.

With Uncle Philip I had none of the delights I had with Uncle John. He had domestic ties, while Uncle John, wifeless for many years, went "wandering on from home to home." Moreover, Uncle Philip went to the Old North, the Orthodox church, and so was not one of those who foregathered on Sundays

at my grandmother's. He was a man of yeas and nays, as if anything more than these came of evil, or would come to it. I could not resist the impression that Aunt White had kept the strong seafarer under, and brought him into subjection. She was a terror to such evil-doers as my cousin Sidney Herrick and myself, and something in her voice sent tremors down my spine. I have been assured, however, that her forbidding manner masked a disposition generally kind. Without children of their own she and Uncle Philip had "the spirit of adoption," and exercised it for the benefit of this one and that, reaping in one instance an unspeakable reward of

tireless care. Aunt White was one of the Savages of Northeast Harbor, Mount Desert,— not an indigenous tribe, but a family of that name which is still flourishing in those lovely parts; and I have sometimes wondered if my qualified regard for her was not the merest *nominis umbra*, some early misconception of an expression common in the family, — "the Savages of Mount Desert."

No man ever had warmer admiration than Uncle Philip had from his brother Ambrose and my father. He was, they told me, as good a seaman as ever trod a deck, absolutely fearless, and with a spice of daring in his composition. He was one of the five hundred Mar-

bleheaders who were liberated from Dartmoor Prison in 1815. Before his final capture his experience was an interesting one. He was prize-master on board the ships "Alfred" and "Alexander," and in the latter met the "Invincible Napoleon," a French corvette of sixteen guns, which had been captured by the British. She surrendered to the "Alexander," and Uncle Philip was put in command of her. Off Cape Ann one fine Sunday morning he was chased by the frigates "Tenedos" and "Shannon," and ran his prize on Norman's Woe, escaping with his crew. The corvette was got off by the frigates' boats, but she was again captured by another privateer before reach-

ing Halifax. Uncle Philip was soon off again upon the dangerous seas, and was finally captured, as I have said, and sent to Dartmoor Prison, where, with nearly or quite half of all the privateersmen hailing from Marblehead, he awaited the end of the war.

Ambrose Haskell White, my father's youngest uncle, was born Dec. 17, 1800, and died June 3, 1881. He followed the sea for thirty years, and for twelve of these the Batavia and China trade. Afterward, for many years, he was a commission merchant in Boston. He was the only member of our family to acquire wealth to even a moderate extent. He was a perfect gentleman of the old school, with

something of the reserve that often came from the habit of the ship-master sailing on long voyages and on no footing of equality with the ship's crew. Blair's sermons were his delight, and the ideal they set for him was perhaps in his mind when he advised me frankly against entering the ministry. For Daniel Webster he had a boundless reverence, and probably never believed one allegation against his personal character. There never was a better brother, and in my grandmother's imagination he was a kind of friendly deity. His wife, Harriet Spaulding, of Newburyport, was a lady of such lovely manners and such kindly heart that she "made human nature seem beautiful" to

all who had the privilege of her acquaintance.

One of my father's earliest recollections was of the frigate "Constitution's" successful escape from three British men-of-war. This was Sunday, April 3, 1814. The "Constitution" ran into Marblehead Harbor, and there was great excitement, the people watching the chase from the roofs and steeples, and expecting the bombardment of the town. In an earlier and much more tragical event my father had taken a not dishonorable part. He had gone "down on the head" to see the terrible fight between the "Chesapeake" and "Shannon," which resulted so disastrously for the "Chesapeake." One of her crew

was "Uncle Frederick;" that is, William Frederick who married my father's aunt, Remember White. He was "the mildest-mannered man" that ever was engaged in such a monstrous business; but when the "Chesapeake" was boarded, and he was cornered between decks by a British tar, he opened his head with his boarding hatchet, and ever afterward had the burden of that act upon his soul. My grandmother was washing that day, and when Charles, my father's oldest brother (1802–1846), came home, and she asked, "Where 's John?" and he made answer, "Down on the head with Ben (1807–1857) seein' the foight," she dried her arms, rolled down her sleeves, and went in search of them.

In February, 1815, the town was illuminated for the peace of that year, and father had a lively recollection of going round with one of his brothers to see the windows all ablaze. The next August and September were months of fearful storm, a hailstorm in August being long remembered for the destruction which it brought upon the town. September 23 came the September Gale, which figured so importantly in the recollections of all persons who were then living on the New England coast. Garrison, who was then living in Lynn, never forgot it; Whittier made it the subject of his first literary effort in a manuscript-book his mother made for him; and Holmes embalmed his memory of

it in his verses, "The September Gale." But it was a storm of September 2 or September 3 which wrought my father's greatest woe. His father sailed for Grand Bank September 1, and was sighted the next day, but never again. For years my grandmother cherished the fond hope that he would come again, but she was solitary in her vain imagination.

The loss of her husband left Mother Chadwick, as we always called her, with six children to care for, the youngest but eighteen months old. The oldest boy was thirteen, and he and the others soon found ways of helping their mother, who was desperately poor. Parson Bartlett, who was her minister from

1811 until 1849, was a friend and an adviser whom she could ill have spared. When my father was seven he used to go up to the Ferry, the Marblehead side of Salem Harbor, with his brother, and get, time after time, a peck of corn, the gift of Uncle Mike Haskell, carry it up to Forest Mills and have it ground, and then carry home the meal. The round trip was some seven miles. Sometimes the growing boy had for his supper a single baked potato. His early schooling was but slight, but after he began to go to sea he studied navigation. When he was ten years old Uncle Tom Haskell gave him a wood-horse and saw, and a sled to drag them on. He was my grandmother's uncle, and I well

remember him, — a man of violent temper and benignant face, with silver hair that was a glorious crown, and every way most good to see. He was one of the many who gathered before church at my grandmother's, where dried flag-root, dried orange-peel, and peppermints were portioned out with much discrimination. There was always a cloud upon his reputation, because in 1817 he was accessory to the breaking of Uncle Mike Haskell's will which gave Mother Chadwick six hundred dollars, which to her would have meant being "rich beyond the dreams of avarice;" and even the sixty that she got was something wonderful. But, for all that, he showed much kindness to her and

her boys. For two years, when he was ten and eleven, my father helped his mother a good deal with his wood-sawing. At the best he could saw a cord a day, and earn fifty cents. This he often did when he was sawing wood for the fishermen to take on their vessels. During these tender years he also worked on fish, carrying them to the "flakes" to dry, and off again, working sometimes ten hours a day, and getting eight cents an hour because he did so well, when only six had been agreed upon, — a man getting ten cents; and he was a little fellow for his years.

In his school days, playing truant with his brother Ben "up to the Ferry," Ben got a serious hurt climb-

ing into a wagon by the wheel. My father had to be the bearer of ill tidings to his mother, and it was more than one bad quarter of an hour he had about it, then and for months after when Ben could n't walk. To go to meeting Sundays was inexorable law, and the boys must go to bed early Saturday nights to have their one suit washed and mended. The Ferry was a magnet that drew my father powerfully. When President Monroe came to town, July 8, 1817, he spent most of the day going to the Ferry and returning several times, after getting a bad hurt from a peaked fence, which he was climbing to see the President. But he saw him, and therein was more fortunate than Whittier, who set out in

search of him in Haverhill, and mistook for his footprints those of an elephant which had disputed with him the honors of the day. To make a sure thing of it, my grandmother kept both Saturday and Sunday evenings sacredly, and her children were subjected to close confinement from sundown at Saturday until Monday morning, except for going to church and Sunday-school. My father never kept back a cent of his earnings for his private uses. They all went to his mother; and when one day the family was in sore distress, he went into pitch-penny "down to wharf" with two cents, to see what he could do. He had a dangerous run of luck, and took home his winnings, forty cents, to his mother.

She at first refused to touch the unclean thing; but her children were hungry, and there was not a cent in the house to buy bread, and she succumbed to the insistence of her boy. It was not at all like her to do so, but with her Puritan conscience she had a wondrous heart of motherhood.

Her own children did not exhaust its fount of kindliness. Her mother dying in 1808, she took her brother Ambrose, then seven years old, into her family, and mothered him until he reached maturity. In 1819 her sister Susannah died, her husband went to "the Far Indies," and Mother Chadwick adopted her only child, John Peach, a baby some eighteen months old. To her he was

as one of her own children, living with her until his marriage in 1846, and amply repaying all her early sacrifice and care. Somewhat later, Uncle John White losing his wife, she took him and his children into her little house, and did for them as best she could. When I began to know her in the forties, — and she was going on from sixty to seventy years of age, — she was so placid that it seemed as if she never could have known the burden of anxiety, the touch of care. She helped her daughter's tailoring, always, with surprising prodigality for one whose *res angusta domi* had been so extremely narrow, demanding an extra quarter of a yard for my trousers to avoid an unseemly gore in the waistband. She

braided and "drew in" innumerable mats, making a yellow dye for her pieces from lichens which — kind Heaven forgive! — I scraped for her from the pasture rocks; but she always had time for any one of her several favorite books, of which "Moses His Choice" was her peculiar joy. That, like some of the others, had lost its covers and a few of the opening pages. At her death in 1870, in her ninetieth year, her widowhood had been fifty-five years long; and under her name and her husband's on the stone on "the old hill" it is written, "And there was no more sea."

In his thirteenth year my father began that seafaring life which, with brief interruptions, he followed until

1860. Until the last days of his life he could remember on what day he sailed each time, and on what days he set out for home and got there, how much salt he carried, and how much of it he wet, how many quintals of fish he got, and how the wind veered on such and such day. His first fishing was with Uncle Tom Haskell for mackerel around Block Island, and on the Jersey coast. One catch was brought into New York, and packed upon the Brooklyn side. He got in a little more schooling, and March 20, 1824, he sailed for the first time for the Grand Bank of Newfoundland in the schooner "Mary," with Skipper John Goodwin. The name, the same as that borne by the ill-fated vessel in which

his father had been lost, must have chilled his mother's heart with sad foreboding. It was a hard beginning. The first night it blew a heavy gale, so that a two-reef foresail was all the vessel could bear. It was bitter cold, and the smoke blew back into the forecastle, so that they could have no fire. In those days the fire was made in the companion-way. Seasick and homesick, the poor boy lay in his berth, — a contracted one in the fore-peak, the cook's usual place, — nibbling a loaf of bread his mother had made for him, and salting it with tears. The next morning there were two feet of ice on deck. A few days after getting to the Bank my father was thrown down the main hatch by a sudden lurch of the vessel, and dis-

abled for some days. This was one of several accidents that would have broken a less knotted strength. A year or two before, a sixteen-foot oar had pulled him off the wharf into the bottom of a "Moses boat," and he was taken up for dead. He was home again on the 1st of August, twenty-five thousand fish in the good "Mary's" hold, which meant a splendid fare. Looking back on those one hundred and thirty days, it seemed strange to him that he ever went upon another trip. The cook was generally the butt of endless ridicule and of practical jokes, which were sometimes extremely cruel, besides general abuse. Crews varied in the degree of their brutality. That of the "Mary" was one of the worst,

and my father told me that he should not have survived the ordeal if it had not been for the kindness of Dick Ireson,a nephew of "Old Flood," the hero of Whittier's ballad, who stood between him and the worst devices of his enemies. Nevertheless he sailed again in the same vessel September 3, the skipper delaying sailing for a day that he and his crew might see General Lafayette, who was then making his triumphal progress through the country. All day there was a pouring rain. Some three weeks out, a barrel of mackerel fell upon his back and nearly finished him. Getting home December 3, still seriously ailing from the crushing blow he had received, he went to school again until the time came for

fitting out for the spring fare. This time he sailed with his Uncle John White in the schooner "Hope," and in the same vessel with the same skipper until 1831, two fares each year, making at the best $200 a year. It was easy in those times to hire a man for one fare for $75 to $100, but my father always went "on shares."

The year 1830 was a memorable one in my father's life. Then he for the first time met my mother, Jane Stanley (born April 28, 1812; died February 18, 1874). His first sight of her was not auspicious, for she was sitting in the chimney-corner crying with the toothache. Her brothers were plaguing her, and my father's sympathy was the beginning of the happy end. She had just

come back to the old home from Oxford, Mass., where, since 1827, she had been a factory girl in Slater's mills. The town had been ruined by the embargo and the war, and Father Stanley had taken his whole family and gone to Oxford, in order that the children might work in the factory. The Stanley house in Marblehead was one of the oldest in the town, with the upper story jutting out over the lower for convenience (at least so they said) in shooting Indians in case of siege. The chimney was of vast proportions, and, sitting in the corner, one could look up and see the wandering stars. Father Stanley, publicly known as "Master Alec," was a cripple from his birth. In our time such a

trouble would have surgical remedy at once; then it was suffered to go on and increase. But he was an active boy, and one year went to the Banks. He was an inveterate smoker, and one of the minor pleasures of my childhood was to see him light his pipe with his burning-glass. His physical limitation was turned to intellectual account. He was the champion checker player of the town. You would think you were doing finely, taking piece after piece, and suddenly you were completely done for. He always insisted that Benjamin Greenleaf, whose famous arithmetic lasted for two generations of New England boys and girls, had treated him dishonestly. Greenleaf was teaching in the

town, and Father Stanley's story was that they made the arithmetic together, and then came the war, and they could not get a publisher; and Greenleaf went off with the manuscript, and ultimately published it, and made himself comfortable for life. Father Stanley particularly claimed all those tremendous problems concerning the woman who "went to market with a basket of eggs," and others of that sort. One thing is sure: he had all those problems at his tongue's end, and a private repertory of others like unto them. I always fancied that he looked very much like Benjamin Franklin. His wife, Jane Wills, died in 1837, so that I never knew her.

It was between the spring and fall fares of 1831 that father and mother were engaged to each other. They were married by Parson Bartlett, Jan. 19, 1834. Parson Bartlett was very anxious for some years that they should join the church, but mother thought she "was not good enough," and father felt sure that, if *she* was n't, *he* was n't; and so they never did it. My father would plague my mother sometimes about their courting days, and she would say, blushing like a rose in June, "Father, how can you be so silly?" Or I would do the plaguing, beg her to tell me all about it, and then she would say, "Father, how can you sit there and let that boy go on in such a way?" But in truth they were

both very reticent about their love affairs. Not until the night when mother was "fading away from the land of the leal," and father and I were waiting in another room for her last awakening, were his lips unsealed. That story I may not confide to any other, but it was very beautiful in its frank simplicity. I cannot conceive of a more tender and unselfish love than theirs, yet there was no outward demonstration. Even when father went to sea or came home again, I think there was no mutual embrace before the children's eyes. When he was coming in, some one would rush in and say, "Mrs. Chadwick," or "Aunt Jane," "your husband's coming up the harbor." I can see her now going about her work with

wilful steadiness; and when father came in how her color heightened as he took her hand and said, "How are you, Jane?" and she answered in some simple fashion.

When he came home in 1834, Nov. 25, he found a little daughter two days old awaiting him. She was named Jane Elizabeth, but we called her Jennie in her maturer years. Father had now come to be himself the master of a vessel, and was "Skipper Chadwick," or "Cap'n Chadwick," to his friends for the remainder of his life. The first vessel which he sailed as skipper was the "Ploughboy" in 1832, when he was only twenty-two years old. But he let no man despise his youth. Drink was one of the dangers with which he

had to contend, his own temperance being always strict without being total abstinence. Once a drunken hand grew mutinous, but was brought to terms when the young skipper took up a windlass-bar, and with a strong expression threatened to knock out his brains. At another time the offending keg of liquor — "kāg" was the usual pronunciation — was poured into the sea. His profanity had none of Andrew Jackson's genial latitude, and it was instinctively reserved for great occasions. But he frequently in middle life strengthened his speech with terms which were undoubtedly corruptions of profane usage. "'Od dast you!" was the worst of these, and I remember that I once invited

it by throwing a bean-bag (one used in a delightful game) and knocking his pipe, which he had just filled and lighted, out of his mouth, and breaking it into pieces. It came back with a vehemence that would have hurt me a good deal if I had not dodged behind a door. He dearly loved his pipe, and when times were hard in 1857, and we were all of us on short rations, he said he would give up anything else sooner than his tobacco. He had given it up in 1837, but he would never make the sacrifice again. He avoided uncleanness in his speech even more completely than profanity. He not only avoided it absolutely, but he would not tolerate it in others. Many a time in the shoemaker's shop I have

seen him blush at some questionable narration; and, when his own back-shop was polluted, he would say, though the offender were some valued customer, "Stop that, or get out of here." At the same time he could not bear to have the ancient landmarks removed or misnamed; and there was a half-sunken rock in the harbor, which in ruder times had been given a name not fit for ears polite. Some one, with the best intentions in the world, had given it a new name, and once, when my father was taking out a sailing party, the new name was given in answer to a question as to what rock it was. Instantly my father flashed out indignantly the traditional name; and the dovecotes were fluttered visibly.

In 1834, the year of his marriage, my father's schooner was the "Statesman;" and he owned one-third of her. One of his hands died on the first trip, the only time he met with this misfortune. The winter of '34–'35 was one of the happiest of his life. There was a baby in the house, and he was now adding some $50 a winter to his clear gains, by making shoes between his return in the late autumn and his beginning to fit out for the spring fare. He had been doing this since 1825. He was not a rapid workman on the bench, but few workmen could make a better shoe. The stitch was never lengthened, even in the shank, to hurry up the work. It was this winter or the

next that he had an amusing experience. He was living at the foot of Orne Street, in the Lawrence house, and he started for Mother Stanley's with little Jane in his arms. Idler's Hill (so called because it was a favorite loafing place) one of the longest and steepest in the town, was very slippery, and near the top he began to slip backward with his precious freight. Afraid of injuring that, his hands were, as it were, tied, and he kept on slipping and slipping until he brought up with his back against Hawkes's store at the foot of the hill. The small boys coasting on the hill enjoyed his discomfiture exceedingly. So did not he.

His first year on the "States-

man" was a prosperous one, but his second one (1835) was so only in part. His fall fare was one of the meanest that he ever got, only 5.40 quintals. Before sailing in the spring of 1836 he exchanged his third of the "Statesman" for a third of the "Hero," paying $333.33 for his bargain. The "Hero" was fourteen tons larger than the "Statesman," which was only seventy-two. My father trod her deck for eleven successive seasons, twenty-one fares in all, only one fare in 1841. To his memory in after years she was more a living creature, a beloved friend, than an inanimate thing. He dwelt upon her virtues as upon those of a dear child that he had lost. But his

first trip on her, though he brought home twenty-two thousand fish, was one of the most miserable he ever sailed. It was on this trip that his crew were mutinous. The offenders were got rid of on his return, and in the fall everything went smoothly until November 8, when in a very heavy gale he lost a shot of cable, one hundred and eighty fathoms, and shipped a sea that knocked off the stern a good bit, and made it every way desirable to get home as soon as possible. On his return, August 1, 1837, he found a second daughter in the house, Sarah, born May 17, and destined to be his caretaker for twenty-two years after her mother's death in 1874. How little could he imagine when he came

home in 1837, and found the helpless child upon its mother's breast, that he would find in hers for many years a mother's patient heart! The year 1838 — which was, for many persons, because of the crash of 1837, one of the blackest on the list — was for my father the most successful of his life. On his spring fare he got 750 quintals, and on both fares cleared $700. His happiest day was ever that on which he sailed again into the harbor, whether he had wet all his salt or only half of it. He always protested that a man did n't know what happiness was who did not have the joy of coming back to weans and wife from a sea-voyage. What blessed times those weeks between the end of the first

fare and the beginning of the second always were for me, when I was old enough to go alone or with one of my sisters to the "washing-out," or to carry around the tokens of good will that were expected as religiously as wedding-cards in good society. "Washing-out" meant the washing of the fish which had been packed in salt in the schooner's hold. This was sometimes done in a pound lashed to the side of the schooner, a little off from the beach, and sometimes on the beach. Once washed, the fish were carried to the flakes and dried, and then packed in the warehouse. Father's dinner was always sent to him in two tin pails, one of them full of tea. How those tin pails did shine! It would have

made my mother sick to discover that hers were not the brightest on the scene. As for the tokens of good will we carried round, it was a nice business who should have only crackers, much prized for their sea savor, and who should have in addition a piece of smoked halibut or some "tongues and sounds," or a smoked hagdon, gamiest of the game that is not quite inedible. Hardly less interesting was the packing of my father's chest; and nothing could exceed the neatness and the carefulness with which my mother bent above this sacred task, and with the haunting fear each time that it might be the last.

In 1839 the profit on the two fares fell off $300 from the previous

year. In 1840 his fortune was still worse. That spring he had bought a new, small two-story house on Stacey Street. It was a very cosey little house, with a bit of meadow at the rear, where the frogs and crickets had full orchestras. It was just at the foot of Elbridge Gerry's garden, and "the New Road," a narrow footpath leading to "Allen's stile" and the sea-front, was only a few steps away.

On his first fare in 1840 my father lost $50, and on his second did not much more than make this up. This was the more discouraging because on his arrival, November 20, he found a boy awaiting him, the boy who writes this story, born October 19, when the unspeak-

ably inane enthusiasm for hard cider and William Henry Harrison was filling all the air. He was hard put to it for money to meet current expenses, having put all he could rake together into the little house. He took what "lumping" he could get; that is, helping others to wash out and handle their fish. In 1841 he went only one fare, one hundred and forty-five days, from April 27 to September 19. Twenty-two thousand fish meant a good catch; but he did not get a cent for his share till the next April; and so again it was close pickings. The bounty money (paid by the United States Government to encourage seafaring) was never so welcome as this year. The amount was $36. The

next year the fish brought only $1.75 a quintal, whereas at the best they brought $3.00. "A man had to cut his rashers thin to live" was my father's comment on the situation. For two good trips he got only $250. In 1843 his fall fare was "a regular Bonanza," one thousand quintals! — and his net gains for the season amounted to $500. The next year was less fortunate, and the fall fare had an incident that entailed for my father countless hours of miserable pain, and this for many years. Four days out, in bad weather, a block somewhere aloft was split, and the shive and pin, following with horrible momentum, struck him on the head. When he came to, he imag-

ined that the vessel had been struck by lightning, and his first question was for her safety. He would not have the vessel put about for home, and the men did what they could for him. Their remedies were drastic, but they were measurably effective. All that winter, however, Parson Bartlett was a frequent visitor, tending the ugly wound; for Parson Bartlett was a physician literally, as well as a physician of souls. Even the orthodox did not object to his gratuitous treatment of their bodies. His face was rubicund, and he was a goodly man to see.

The year 1845 was a tolerably good year; but the year 1846 was an *annus mirabilis*, a wonderful year of sorrow both for my father and the

town. The spring fare was so unprofitable that my father moored the "Hero" in the harbor after washing out his fish, resolved not to try his luck again that year. Later he got another skipper for her, who backed out; and my father, recovering his spirits, got a good crew, and sailed September 3. Ten days after his arrival on the Bank came the great gale of September 19, which since then has been for Marblehead "the September Gale" *par excellence;* also "the gale of '46." Out of twenty-six schooners that sailed for a fall fare only sixteen returned; and one on a long fare made the whole number lost eleven, with sixty-seven men and boys. I never tired of hearing my father's story. Hardly ever did I

go home during the last years of his life without encouraging him to tell it; and he was not unwilling, though he would say, "What do you want to hear about that again for?"

The 18th was a lowering day, and ominous of storm. On the morning of the 19th the wind began to blow at seven o'clock, and by ten o'clock it was blowing a gale. There was no rain, but the air was thick with "wind-food," not fog, but a dry mist, which lifted about noon. Until this lifted you could not see a quarter of a mile. As soon as the wind began to blow hard, father hove up, and ran to speak with John White, his cousin, son of his Uncle John (schooner "Clinton"), but could n't find him. He had already hoisted his anchor,

and gone to the westward. The "Hero" was then laid under a balance mainsail (a small mainsail kept set while fishing) and head-of-jib till twelve o'clock. Only one vessel was sighted during the whole gale, and that was the "Hezron," skipper, Uncle Sam Blackler, and she was riding at anchor. At twelve o'clock the balance mainsail was taken in and the jib handed, and a three-reef foresail set, the vessel's head being to westward all the time. As the afternoon advanced the wind began to haul to west-northwest, blowing as hard as ever. At five o'clock the foresail blew away "like an old pocket handkerchief," and the gaff was hauled down. The sea was then taking the "Hero" on the quarter,

and threatening to "pitch-poll her over;" that is, first stand her on her nose, and then throw her upside down. The seas ran half-mast high and a full half-mile long. They seemed to break from the bottom as if the Bank were one great reef or shoal. This was the critical moment, and father determined to wear the vessel round. The chances were against success, but to take the sea on the quarter meant sure destruction. His men begged him not to do it, but she had good headway, — about three miles an hour, — and he told them he must do what he thought best. They could go below if they liked. The helm was put hard up, and the vessel came round, and put her nose "to the old sea" (that which the

wind made before it changed), and in five minutes she was "riding the water like a bird." For my father the "Hero" was "named and known by that hour's feat." A big lantern was set in the main rigging, but not a light of any other vessel was to be seen. About half-past nine the stars came out, but the heaviest squalls were between that time and half-past ten. Then it began to moderate.

At daybreak it was as moderate as you could ask, and one vessel was in sight, the "James Mugford," skipper, Richard Dixey. A heavy swell was rolling. After breakfast a new foresail was set with balance-mainsail and jib, and they stood westward, having been blown a good piece off the Bank's southeastern edge. Sailing

three or four hours, they came on a lot of deck-plank, then a lot more, then a mast, then a boat, which proved to be the "Sabine's," Samuel Dodd, and finally water barrels, and everything imaginable belonging to a vessel that could float. For the next two days they kept on sailing through an ocean wilderness, where tokens of destruction greeted them on either hand. They spoke with a Provincetown vessel which was going home, and another that had thrown over three hundred quintals of fish. Saddest of all was a big schooner, her tonnage nearly twice that of the "Hero," on her beam-ends, her masts lifting up twenty feet out of the water, and then plunging down again. The "Clinton" also was encountered,

abandoned by her crew. Her deck had been lifted, and her skipper, John White, and one of his men had been swept overboard and lost. He was a genial soul. How well do I remember him on the eve of his departure, and others who came not back! They made a merry group about the door of Samuel Sparhawk's shop, where they were getting their supplies. My father's brother Charles was one of these. He was skipper of the "Senator," one of the eleven vessels that were lost.

The Provincetown vessel which my father spoke on the morning after the storm brought home the news of his safety, and that of some others; but we were long in doubt as to the limits of the disaster. My

mother was hardly less anxious than she would have been if the "Hero" had not been spoken. My uncle George, her brother, haunted the Old North steeple and the headlands of the town, straining his eyes to make out each approaching vessel, if haply she might be one of the survivors of the storm. My father's crew were sick at heart, and begged him to go home, and his own inclination was strong enough to do so, but he held on into November, and then sailed, arriving on the 18th of the month. He was thirty-seven years old that day, but I doubt if he or mother had a thought of that. It stands out from all others of my boyhood with an awful vividness. I went to the wharf with "Bedo"

Frost, whose father was on board the "Hero." Appleton's Wharf was packed with people, but the crowd made a passageway for the crew to pass along, each with some silent friend, all silent. On one side of my father as we moved homeward was his shoresman, and I walked on the other, the crowd making a kind of hollow square about us, and I not insensible of the dignity of the situation. I can hear now the dull plod of my father's heavy boots and feel the nervous pressure of his hand. I remember, too, that as we came out on Stacey Street I looked back, and saw the crowd defiling all the way through the New Road. All day long my father sat in the neat cellar-kitchen, pleasantest of little rooms,

and answered with low voice the questions of the wives and mothers, the brothers and the friends, who came inquiring for the living and the dead, his own heart breaking all the time with helpless sympathy. I remember only one passionate outbreak: "John Chadwick, do you dare to tell me I shall never see my husband again?"

The fishing business of the town never recovered from that blow. Father had little heart for it, and my mother begged him not to go again. Moreover, she got Parson Bartlett, who always had great influence with my father, to intercede for her. There was something stolid in his make, and they would not have moved him if his will had

not been already undermined. The "Hero" was sold in January, 1847. As the years went on he blamed his foolishness. Selling the "Hero" and not buying the "Hezron," were two regrets to which he frequently recurred as he grew old; and with good reason, for in 1847 he entered on a period of ups and downs,— the downs, if I may say so, in the ascendant,—which lasted twenty years. In 1847 he fished for mackerel in the Bay and off Mount Desert. At Mount Desert he met the Stanleys, who are so numerous on the Cranberry Islands, and who all descended from one of my mother's people. "Uncle Peter" and the stalwart brothers of his generation, so well known to early

visitors to Mount Desert, were the sons of that first settler. In 1848 my father became part owner of a new and handsome fishing smack, the "Cabinet," forty-four tons, and for two years went bay fishing in her and to Brown's Bank. There was not much in it; and in 1850, mother's birthday, April 28, found him off for Grand Bank again in the schooner "Rose." This birthday gift my mother the more painfully appreciated, because, for the time being, having sold the little house in Stacey Street, pending the completion of another on Reed's Hill, we were living in a house on Little Harbor close by "the Fountain Yard," as we then called the space about my Uncle Bowden's

carpenter shop, quite ignorant of the reason why it was so called, and of Agnes Surriage's delightful story. Soon after my father's sailing there was a fearful storm, a match for that of the next following spring, in which Minot's Ledge lighthouse was destroyed. Our house stood on a cliff, at the foot of which was a narrow garden. There has been no garden since that storm. The storm annexed it to the beach, and the sea, breaking against the cliff, so shook the house that my mother took down her china from the shelves, lest it should fall. That storm may not have reached Grand Bank, but it did so for my dear mother's vivid imagination and her anxious heart; and so did every

storm that blew that year, until her husband came again upon the wings of the most mighty of them all, August 25. How it did rain and blow! We had been ten days in the new house, and the good fare of fish nearly half paid for it above the cellar wall. We were "the first that ever burst" into that quarter of the town. There were bars to let down, and pastures not far off, and old John Gregory's fish fences and warehouses just beyond us up the hill. Father and mother lived and loved there twenty-four years, and for twenty-two more father lived there without mother.

In 1851 the Saturnian days returned. Mr. William Humphreys, the shoresman whom my father

honored above all the rest of those for whom he sailed, built the fine big schooner "Emmeline," one hundred and eight tons burthen, the old measurement. She was launched June 8, — a happy boy, who shall be nameless, on her deck. But he had a bad quarter of a minute when, soon after the first delightful sensation when the crowd cried, "There she goes!" the ways spread and she struck heavily, careened a good deal, seemed in doubt for a moment whether to stop or go on, but at last found her true element. She had started some of her trunnels, but had sustained no serious injury. The schooner "Ariel" was launched about the same time, and the two vessels sailed for Boston the same day to get

their salt. They made a race of it. There was a throng upon each jutting headland of the town and Neck; and when the "Emmeline" left the "Ariel" way, way behind, I was like Dr. Holland's hero who "felt the bud of being in him burst." The ensuing trip was phenomenal in my father's experience. Sailing June 19 he "got in" September 25 with one thousand two hundred and twenty quintals of fish. He was off again October 6 to get his bounty, which required four months at sea. November 6 he started for home, after three weeks of good fishing. The return passage proved to be the worst he ever knew. For nearly a month he was buffeted by incessant storms; and only when it seemed that the vessel could not

live another hour, Provincetown light sent forth its cheerful gleam and she was soon riding at anchor safe and sound. In 1853 he sailed in another new schooner, the "Sarah Jane," one hundred and twenty tons burthen, nearly half as large again as the "Hero." But my father always declared that neither the "Emmeline" nor the "Sarah Jane" was so good a sea-boat as the vessel to whose surpassing excellence he was as true as was Leander to the Hero of old days.

"Home-staying hearts are happiest,"

and his was a home-staying heart. He loved the sea, but more and more he dreaded the long separations from his wife and children. In 1854

the "Cadet" — a smaller boat than the "Cabinet," which he had bought a part of for the peace and comfort of his uncles, Philip and John White, who must still be fishing in some sort — went ashore on Skinner's Head in a big storm that dragged almost every vessel in the harbor from her anchorage, but imbedded the others safely in the sand of River Head Beach. The "Cadet" was repaired and lengthened out at great and vain expense, and the oversight which this business required had much to do with my father's staying at home in 1854. He built a little shop, and for a few years endeavored to combine shoemaking with the selling of West India goods. The venture was unprofitable, and went under

in the crash of 1857. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. The hard times blew to me the opportunity of my life. Working with my father, I sewing and he lasting and finishing, we made twenty-five pairs of first rate slick-bottomed ankle-ties a day at four cents a pair. In good times they brought seven cents. Here was a dollar for the joint day's work. My father could not stand it. He gave up the shop and the shoemaking and went to sea again in the "Emmeline;" and when he came back and found me anxious to go to the Normal School at Bridgewater and my sister Jennie more anxious for me to do so than I was myself, and glad to pay the way in part out of her slender salary (she

was a primary school teacher, her salary $150 a year, then the regular amount), he said that I might as well be getting a better education as "working for nothing and finding my own thread;" and so to school I went, "the difference to me" not measurable in current coin.

The next ten years were for my father years of much anxiety. His slender savings shrank from year to year, until he had only a few hundred dollars left. My sister Jennie, who was the apple of his eye, fell sick with a terrible brain fever, after which came a long, slow convalescence, with a whole year of speechless melancholy for its most painful incident. Mother was aging rapidly under this dreadful dispensation. In 1859 he made his

last trip to the Grand Bank, sailing the "Sarah Jane," and getting a most miserable fare. Steaming across the Bank in 1887 in the "Fulda," I thought how he had spent more than twenty solid years upon that waste of waters; and when the thick fog settled down upon us I thought how, from out such a fog, he had seen the great ships looming up as they went driving on. "Thank God, my good fellows, that we cleared you!" cried one captain from his deck as his ship's quarter almost grazed the "Hero's" stern. From out the fog there grew for us a mighty wind, and our four thousand tons seemed like a chip tossed on the waves; and so I had a better chance to understand what it had meant for

the "Hero," eighty-four tons burthen, to encounter such a storm as that of 1846, — ours but a zephyr in comparison with its awful stress.

From 1860 to 1868 my father worked at shoemaking. My sister's health had never been re-established, and in 1869, August 20, she died; but not until she had encouraged my father to resume his shop-keeping. Hers was a most indomitable spirit, and from out the dying embers of her life flashed many a spark to kindle hope again in her dear father's heart. The new venture was an assured success before she died,— a modest one, and that was threatened with destruction in the hard times of 1873 and the next following years, when

it was quite impossible for my father to refuse credit to the poor fellows who were out of work and had no money. Some of them justified his confidence in their integrity, and after many years paid up their old accounts. Others, and these his heaviest debtors, lived comfortably enough and made no sign. Altogether, he lost several thousand dollars, more than half of his lifelong accumulation. This loss would have been borne less patiently if his life's greatest sorrow had not at the same time befallen him, — my mother's death, Feb. 18, 1874. We have been told that a majestic grief should be "strong to consume small troubles." His were by no means small; but my mother's death made

them, in comparison with that, a matter of indifference. Her sickness was of short duration. It found her busy, after the customary manner of her life, doing a kindly service to some one who needed mothering. From that time forward my father's life was always tender with the glow of memory and hope.

His success in business was bound to be a modest one, even in the best of times, for he could never find it in his heart to take advantage of a rising market when he had stock in hand. Sheer foolishness, of course; but I am glad he had that kindly disposition. And, nevertheless, — perhaps not entirely so, — he did a thriving little business until Octo-

ber, 1885, when, being seventy-six years old, he gave over his business to another and settled down to the enjoyment of a pleasant and serene old age. Easily it might have been that, had not the gods seen otherwise; for he was a faithful reader of good books and papers all his days, and he had many friends. In the early fifties he took the *National Era*, when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was coming out in it, and it was a penal offence for any one to open the paper until "the tea things" were put away. All the great stories of actual adventure both by land and sea that appeared in the last years of his life he read until his eyes grew dim. Besides, he had the various and rich experi-

ence of his own life to draw upon, and that of many old seamates and companions. Some of these he prized immeasurably, and they responded generously to his loving trust. He did not so much idealize them as he appreciated their essential worth. It was better than a university degree or a royal decoration, I often thought, to be spoken of as he spoke of Andrew Paine and Frank Hiller and Captain Chisholm and some others. The habit of his middle life was reticent; but as he grew old he was both talkative and affable, and, what was the most surprising thing of all, he did a little quiet boasting now and then. There was one story tending to this complexion which he

told me several times in the last years. It was about a time when he and his brother Charles were sailing with their Uncle John, who fell sick on the home passage and put Charles, as the older, in charge of the vessel. On one occasion he had told my father, "John, you know nothing and fear nothing;" and the sharp speech was too well remembered when, as he drew near the coast, Charles could not quite make out his bearings. Appealing to my father he was reminded of his former saying; but, the situation growing desperate, my father came down from his high horse and helped his brother out. That was the time when such a sea was running that the channel between

Marblehead Light and Cat Island Rock broke from the bottom, and through that furious welter of the waves the "Hope" came tearing home.

The hope of a long evening rest was rudely broken when, in January, 1888, he was overtaken by a dangerous illness which was of long continuance and left him but the shadow of his former self. A mere accident had induced a cold, and this ended in pneumonia or some profound bronchial inflammation. The vigor of his constitution declared itself in the wonderful rally that he made from such a blow. But his old strength did not return. No one could have more tender care than my sister lavished

on him during the years of wavering hope and gradual decline; and no one could have had more loving and intelligent assistance than she had from her cousin, Jennie Stanley, who now for many years had been one of the little family. He had a stubborn streak in him, and could not be kept from overwork sometimes, especially when the fruit of his fine orchard was being gathered, and he was making sure that the best went to his son John. Except when kept in doors by special ailments or by stress of weather he went hither and thither, well nigh to the end, often making a half-mile or more in good time. A few months before his death he gave me his quadrant. When he

bought it in 1830, it had served another fisherman some fifty years. On his eighty-sixth birthday, November 18, 1895, I sent him the following verses; and he did not resent their praise as he would have done a few years earlier. Either the expression of affection had become more sweet to him or he had grown more perfectly sincere and knew that he deserved it all.

TO MY FATHER'S QUADRANT

Poor homesick thing, I fear I do you wrong,
  Far from the smiting of the eastern seas,
Here in my city house to hang you up,
  My pride to flatter and mine eyes to please.

CAP'N CHADWICK

If you were conscious, you would ache and moan
Through every fibre of your mystic frame,
In this dull place to find yourself bestowed,
Nor hold me clear of treachery and blame.

How would you long to find yourself once more
Where the great waves go rolling up and down,
And the loud winds that spur their steaming flanks
The sailors buffet and their voices drown!

How would you wonder if the honest hand
That held you sunward on the heaving main
Had quite forgot the trick it knew of old,
And never so would manage you again!

CAP'N CHADWICK

Yea, verily, it *was* an honest hand,
Warm with the beating of an honest heart;
Never from stouter did good courage come,
Never from truer the good impulse start.

You were his guide on many a dangerous sea,
Through storm and darkness led him safely home;
As you to him, so he shall be to me,
Whatever seas I sail or lands I roam.

So onward sped, I cannot steer amiss,
Whatever darkness gathers round my way:
Let night come down, — I set the faithful watch,
And wait it out until another day.

It was my great good fortune to be at the old home a few days in March,

1896, before his last sickness began. Friday, the thirteenth, was his last day downstairs. But he was up again, and making his waning strength self-serviceable the Sunday following. The end came on Saturday, the twenty-first, at 1.43 A.M. He faced it with clear-eyed intelligence, and we said to one another how good it was that we had loved each other so much and had had such a good time together. His body lies beside my mother's in the Waterside burying-ground. The sea is not far off; but it is the quiet side of Salem Harbor, and not, as I would like, the Atlantic's unimpeded rush and roar. Yet the great tides forever come and go and make a pleasant music on the shore. The stone that marks his

grave tells that he "went down to the sea in ships and did business on great waters." It further tells that, "In the good schooner 'HERO,' he weathered the September Gale of 1846."

He was a good man. It was inconceivable that he could do any deliberate wrong, or vary by a hair's breadth from the line of perfect honesty and truth. He bothered the Boston merchants a good deal by his anxiety to pay his bills at once. His most serious fault that I remember was some drawback after he had granted to our urgency a favor which dulled the sweetness of its taste; or he would shut the door upon his last remark, leaving us uncertain as to that, and the debate hanging in mid-

air. Such things were slight deductions from a life of constant probity and a temper of unvarying kindliness. No man allowed himself more freely the "delights of admiration" in his relations with his friends. His faith in the Eternal Goodness was as simple and entire as a child's faith in its mother when it is lying snug and warm upon her breast.

Who will has heard my father's story told. It is a very simple one; so simple, possibly, that it was not worth the telling. I have written mainly for the joy of my own heart. So doing I have rescued from a busy time some days of sweet companionship with one whose love enriched my life unspeakably, and whose character was to me a quite invaluable

assurance of an innumerable multitude of men and women of his simple, steadfast kind, whose quiet service is the saving salt of all communities and states. It must be well with him wherever he is sailing now, below the line of our horizon, upon the open sea, or to what port soever he has come.

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